Bernd Harmsen

Requiem

a secular farewell song cycle

Six songs constitute my 'Requiem' – which actually is a farewell song cycle from the departing person's point of view. The first text of this little collection was “farewell” that I had written in 2010. Martin Götz from Austria set it to music. I liked his slightly Irish sounding folk tune so much that I decided to add more lyrics to create a “Requiem”. By 2013 I had completed the lyrics for six songs that I published as a lyrical version of my song cycle. At that time only three texts had actually music to them. Besides “farewell” there were “by the seven seas” (that, apart from myself, also Svein Jønland and Angela Braitinger had set to music), and “no more". It took me eight more years to complete the music.

Meanwhile, I not only have published the (home recorded) song cycle as well as a live version, but also a songbook* that contains the musical notes and chords of all my acoustic songs, including the six from the Requiem. These days I let Suno AI cover my “Songbook”, i.e. all 29 songs, and I also published the Suno versions of the six songs that together represent my Requiem as a separate playlist on YouTube.

Since,over the years, I recurrently modified the music as well as the lyrics I here now present their 'ultimate' versions.

Bernd Harmsen
Bad Pyrmont, August 2025

My “Songbook” can be downloaded from the Internet Archive or my own web site, https://bernd-harmsen.com, where you also find stripped down versions of all songs and links to YouTube playlists.

leaving traces

we speak their law, we use their words
although their buildings crumble
their ancient roads still lead the way
on which we walk and stumble
whole nations speak a language
that very much is theirs
much more than we may think
we are the Romans' heirs
they've left their traces
over many places
unfazed by diff'rent cultures, diff'rent races
they've left their traces

a Facebook page, a mail account
that have been left deserted
unanswered posts on sev'ral boards
that look like ill concerted
a man who once was bustling
thriving, vivid, blithe
silenced now forever
in his prime of life
he's leaving traces
over many places
postings, pictures, thoughts in hyperspaces
he's leaving traces

a proud old man, a baby boy
his long-awaited grandson
descendant, heir to a long line
who will in the long run
set up his sep'rate fam'ly
pass on his genes and name
maybe eventually
he'll even come to fame
he's leaving traces
over many places
the ancestry is showing in their faces
they're leaving traces

we're here on earth for a short visit
we're doing well to make the most of it
bringing forth human achievements
so future generations benefit

we're leaving traces
all over the places
intended, unintended, in all cases
we're leaving traces

by the seven seas

I'm blooming like a sprig in spring
breathing deeply I've come to life
I'm the bird that courts and sings
I'm here to cheer and thrive

hovering over vast and fertile plains
abundance, riches, luxuries
I'm the sunshine when it rains
to lure you off your infancy

and I ride with the wind
I howl with the storm
I calm down like a breeze
by the seven seas

I take my time 'cause life is brief
while I climb towards the crest
I'm gliding down as autumn leaf
providing colour and some rest

and I ride with the wind
I howl with the storm
I calm down like a breeze
by the seven seas

come my time I'm the winter freeze
whispering secrets to the trees
I am tired, but I'm free
I am free

'cause I rode with the wind
and I howled with the storm
I've calmed down like a breeze
beyond the seven seas

I ride with the wind
and I howl with the storm
I calm down like a breeze
by the seven seas

I'm leaving

I came here uninvited
did not mean to intrude
I shared your gathered riches
I shared your drink and food

I'll be gone before long
although I'd like to stay
it is not up to me
when I'll be on my way

I'm leaving
I'm grateful that you've born with me
I'm leaving
what will I leave behind
I'm leaving
besides a fading memory
I'm leaving
a flash inside your mind

I filled the roles provided
I did the best I could
I brought about some damage
I also did some good

I'll be gone before long
although I'd like to stay
it is not up to me
when I'll be on my way

I'm leaving
I'm grateful that you've born with me
I'm leaving
what will I leave behind
I'm leaving
besides a fading memory
I'm leaving
a flash inside your mind

others went this path before
many more will follow
it happens every second
today as tomorrow

I'm leaving
I'm grateful that you've born with me
I'm leaving
what will I leave behind
I'm leaving
besides a fading memory
I'm leaving
a flash inside your mind

farewell

the shadows grow longer
the sun's on the decline
the sky will be burning
and the Gods will resign
I am so tired now
but I'm still feeling fine

so, farewell, farewell,
you loved ones, farewell
keep my memory
farewell, farewell,
my lover, farewell
and think kindly of me

and I gather my friends
reach for my wife's hand
the time that we've shared
has been incredibly grand
my long years' companions and mates
everything has to end

so, farewell, farewell,
you loved ones, farewell
keep my memory
farewell, farewell,
my lover, farewell
and think kindly of me

I will move towards the light
'cause I have ceased to fight
since quite a while
but if you note my smile
you will know that I am glad
'cause I have had
the best of times one could expect
'cause I've known you

so, farewell, farewell
you loved ones, farewell
keep my memory
farewell, farewell
my lover, farewell
and think kindly of me

no more

no more trusting, no more lying
no more longing, no more crying
no more suff'ring, no more feeling
no more hurting, no more healing
no more hoping, no more waiting
no more loving, no more hating

no more trying, no more failing
no more smiling, no more wailing
no more running, no more walking
no more list'ning, no more talking
no more owning, no more yearning
no more teaching, no more learning

no more cheering, no more prancing
no more playing, no more dancing
no more giving, no more sharing
no more won'dring, no more caring
no more smirking, no more grinning
no more gaining, no more winning

no more breathing
no more breathing
no more breathing

here's to all things living

the salmon fishing bear
the roaring lion's might
the pregnant zebra mare
the small mosquito's bite
here's to all things living

the forest, lush and green
the hunter's sense of smell
the tortoise beetle's sheen
the tiny ocean shell
here's to all things living

the sharp eyed bird of prey
the dog's bark at the moon
the salmon's odyssey
the first spring flower's bloom
here's to all things living

the sly and cunning fox
the proud eagle's wing
the old, cart-pulling ox
the common nettle's sting
here's to all things living

the beauty of your eye
that beholds my soul
the beauty of your mind
that beholds my soul